

### Trip To Jerusalem 3-4 Apr 65

We, consisting of 2 Officers and 30 other ranks, departed El Arish at 8.45 AM 3 Apr. It was a miserable, cold, rainy day. The trip to Jerusalem took us 45 minutes and was fairly bumpy at times.

We arrived at Jerusalem Airport at 9.30 and were met by a representative of Kim's Travel Agency and were immediately transported to our Hotel on a short rest prior to our first tour. The Taxis used for the trip from the Airport to the Hotel and for the duration of the tours thereafter, were mostly of latest American models and the drivers were experienced drivers.

The Hotel where we stayed at, called the "New Orient House" was very good and the food was excellent.

The first tour started at 1030 AM and consisted of the following: (1) Visit to the old city of Jerusalem entering via Herod's Gate and visiting Pilate's Palace. (2) Judgement Hall. (3) The Flagellation. (4) Ecce Homo. (5) Walk Along Via Dolorosa (The Way Of The Cross). (6) The Russian Excavations. (7) The Holy Sepulchre and (8) Mount Calvary. (9) During this whole tour it rained and hailed almost consistently.

Our guide was very good but seemed to spend too much

never seen any place quite so commercialized in all my life. It certainly makes one stop and ponder if Religion is what it is supposed to be. Everybody is trying to take you aside to sell you some kind of trinket that such & such a Saint touched on a rock from the site of such & such an event, etc., and the prices for these are out of this world. (Rather appropriate, since this is supposedly the Holy City.

At approx 1.15 PM we returned to the Hotel for dinner which was very palatable and very welcome.

The afternoon tour consisted of the following: (1) Entering the old city of Jerusalem via St Stephen's Gate. (2) Visiting the church of St Anne. (3) The Garden of Gethsemane. (4) The Tomb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Thence to (5) Bethlehem, visiting (6) Rachel's Tomb, (7) The Shepherd's Field. In Bethlehem, we visited the (8) The Church of the Nativity. (9) The Manger. (10) The Chapel of St Jerome and a few other places which I can't remember at present.

In St Stephen's Church, we were privileged (or so we were told) to get a view of a replica of the old city of Jerusalem as it used to be in the early days. The priest, Franciscan I believe, who explained it to us was fluent in the English language with a slight European accent. He was very interesting. He pointed out a place which used to be inside the old city wall, but is now outside, called the Temple of Evil Council (because this was where Jesus Christ

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was sold) and which is now the Headquarters for the United Nations. Needless to say, there was a lot of laughs over that. He also told us about some rock which apparently was the actual rock that the Crucifix took place on. Half of it (which is supposed to be quite authentic) is in the Vatican. The other half is spread all over the world. He said that if you put them together that there would be enough to make at least four of the original. I believe this was one of the few things we were told which one could actually believe.

We returned to the Hotel around 6:30 AM and had a wonderful dinner. Some of us retired early but the most adventurous types decided to go to the Dead Sea Casino for a night's entertainment. Apparently it cost \$2.00 per person for the taxi, \$3.00 for your first drink and \$1.50 per drink thereafter. Rather an expensive evening. Of course, if one preferred, you could buy a bottle for the evening at \$22.00 per bottle. According to reports, it was worth it - lets hope.

The next morning we got up at 7.00 AM, had breakfast and prepared for the third tour which consisted of the following: (1) Drive to the Mount of Olives. (2) Visit the place of the Ascension. Continue driving to Bethany and visit the (3) Tomb of Lazarus (I believe he was the one who died and was revived by Jesus Christ - told to get up and walk again). (4) Visit the house of Mary & Martha better known as Bethany. Proceeded to Jericho by the way of the (5) Apostle's Fountain. (6) The Good Samaritan Inn. To the (7) River of Jordan the place of Baptism. Visit to the (8) excavations at the site of the old

city of Jeddah (where Joshua left his office on 19) last but not least a (10) visit to the Dead Sea. A group of us decided to go in for a dip in our underwear. It's really uncanny the buoyancy one has in this water, there being so much salt content in it, actually 27 per cent. Needless to say, nothing lives in it. It's practically impossible to sink. The waves were quite high and we were floating around just like pieces of driftwood. It was quite an experience.

Photos were taken of all these places visited. Let's hope that they turn out and that we can remember which were taken where.

We returned to the Hotel for a steak dinner at 1.30 PM and then changed into our uniforms for the return trip to El Arish. In the Hotel Lobby there was a souvenir stand and we bought a few souvenirs of the place. These, believe you me, are not exactly given away.

The trip back to El Arish was uneventful and quite smooth. We were back in time for supper.

The tour, to quote one of the participants, who shall remain unnamed, but who will shortly be leaving the RCAF to become a teacher at the School of English in St Jean TN, was Tremendous. The interpreter was very interesting but tended to be voluble at times, the accommodation and food were A1 and the transportation was the best. All in all it was most appreciated by everyone concerned. The organizers were to be and have been commended for it. The price of this trip, I might add, for food, accommodation, transportation and guide came to \$17.00 US.

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Jenkins